

Charles Ilfeld Company Warehouse
200 First Street, N.W.
Albuquerque
Bernalillo County
New Mexico

HABS No. NM-105

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

CHARLES ILFELD COMPANY WAREHOUSE

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Location: 200 1st Street NW, Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, New Mexico.

USGS Albuquerque West Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 13.349880.3883520.

Present Owner: City of Albuquerque owns the building; The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company owns the land (1975).

Present Occupant: Vacant.

Present Use: Vacant, to be demolished.

Significance: The Charles Ilfeld Company Warehouse, built 1911-1912, was part of a large chain of wholesale stores in New Mexico. Designed by the firm of Trost and Trost, the industrial structure with its bands of simple metal, sash windows, projecting cornice and use of graphics makes a bold design statement.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

The Charles Ilfeld Company Warehouse was constructed in 1911-12 from plans drawn up by the architectural firm of Trost and Trost of El Paso, Texas. The contractor was J.A. Harlan and Sons. The building was owned by the Ilfeld Company until 1959, when it was purchased by the Kimball Products Company. It was constructed on land leased from the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad.

The construction of the warehouse received a lot of attention from the local press. The original structure consists of the three story south section and the rear two story east wing. Within a few years it was necessary to expand, and a one-story L-shaped addition to the north and west was constructed circa 1916.

A description of the process of handling goods from arrival to

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departure gives an accurate idea of the function of the building. The goods were unloaded from the trains onto the east wing platform. As many as six 40' freight cars could be unloaded at one time. A metal awning covered the platform and protected the goods. From the platform they were brought inside and sent down a chute to the basement where they were sorted. They were then loaded onto an elevator and taken to the hardware, dry goods, or grocery departments for storage. The goods were then taken by elevator to the top floor of the south wing for packaging and labeling; from there they were taken to the shipping docks in the courtyard (also covered with metal awnings) to await shipment to the other company warehouses and stores. A sample of every item on the inventory was placed on display in the second story mezzanine in the south portion. In the southeast corner of the building there was a special humidor for the cigars. Offices were located in the remaining spaces.

B. Historic Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

1. Charles Ilfeld Company: Charles Ilfeld, born in Prussia, arrived in Santa Fe in August 1865. A month later he joined Adolph Letcher's retail firm in Taos as a clerk and bookkeeper. By 1867 he was a full partner in the firm (which had moved to Las Vegas, New Mexico), and by the mid 1870s had bought Letcher out. The first section of the firm's cash and carry warehouse in Taos was built in 1882 and expanded in 1890. In the early 1900s the company was able to specialize in livestock production and the wholesale field. In 1906 the company was incorporated, and soon decided to establish a major warehouse in Albuquerque, which had become the railroad center of the southwest. Their first warehouse was on land leased from the Franz Huning estate. Within four years they outgrew it and built the Charles Ilfeld Company Warehouse on First Street. The company prospered and, by 1927, had expanded into southern Colorado and northeastern Arizona. Ilfeld's death in 1929 marked the beginning of the company's decline. It was bought out by the Kimball Products Company of Fort Worth, Texas in 1959.
2. Trost and Trost: The architectural firm of Trost and Trost was formed in 1904, by two Brothers Henry C. and Gustave, originally from Toledo, Ohio. Their offices were in El Paso, Texas, and they had projects in various areas of the state. Some of their major commissions were the Carnegie Library in Tuscon, Arizona; the Franciscan Hotel in Albuquerque, New Mexico; four main buildings at the Texas College of Mines and Metallurgy in El Paso, and the County Courthouse, also in El Paso.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished:

Santa Fe, New Mexico. State Records and Archives. William C. Ilfeld Collection.

2. Secondary and published:

Albuquerque Evening Herald. Articles of June 23, 1911; September 29, 1911; March 8, 1912.

Ivers, Louise Harris. "The Pride of Las Vegas, New Mexico." New Mexico Architecture 2:15-19.

Munroe, Kevin S. "Saving the Ilfeld Warehouse in Albuquerque." New Mexico Architecture 16:11-16.

Parish, William J. The Charles Ilfeld Company, A Study of the Rise and Decline of Mercantile Capitalism in New Mexico. Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1961.

Prepared by Mary Beth Betts
Historic American Buildings
Survey
July 1979

From research compiled by
Michael McCachren
Archivist
State Records Center and Archives
Santa Fe, New Mexico
April, 1975

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. Description of exterior:

The warehouse is rectangular with a central court. The south section is three stories, the east wing is two, and the north and west wing are one story. The south (entrance) portion consists of five bays. The building is of steel-reinforced concrete with a pebble-dash surface. The south portion fronts on First Street and Copper Avenue. The east wing faces the railroad spur line and has a wooden loading platform which extends the full length

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of the elevation and midway across the south elevation. The courtyard has concrete docks and ramps on the north, south, and east sides. The roof is flat. While the building was structurally sound it has undergone some demolition including a portion of the south elevation being knocked in, and the roof and electrical wiring of the north wing being removed.

The main entrance is on the western face of the south section. There is a bold projecting cornice across the exterior face of the south portion. The trim is very simple and plain. The entrance was of wooden frame glass doors (removed) flanked by plate glass display windows with copper trim. The mezzanine windows are plate glass with metal frames and vertical mullions. All other windows are of smaller proportions. They are metal sash with three vertical mullions. There are five of these windows evenly spaced across the second and third stories. Their sills form a horizontal band. Two horizontal signs, set into panels, one below the second story and one below the third advertise the Ilfeld company. The remainder of the west elevation is very plain with an occasional window and sign. There is a break at the center of the elevation that is an entrance into the courtyard.

The south elevation is articulated by a central and two end projections. Between these projections are three horizontal bands of windows with continuous sills. Each end projection has a large advertisement set into a panel, while the central projection has an entrance with a large semi-circular surround and an advertisement above it also set into a panel.

The east elevation is composed of a three story, southern section and a two story northern section. There are metal awnings above the first story, and horizontal advertisements below the third story on the southern section; and one above and below the second story of the northern portion. The windows are evenly spaced with continuous sills on the southern section, whereas they are grouped in twos and fours with continuous sills within the group on the northern section. There are three rolling metal doors on this elevation.

The north elevation is very plain with only a few windows.

The courtyard elevations are very simple and utilitarian, with leading docks and ramps, rolling metal doors and windows.

B. Description of Interior:

The interior contains approximately 67,000 square feet of useable space which is divided into areas for sorting, storage, packaging, labeling, display cases, and offices. The architects designed the building to be as fireproof as possible. Each compartment is separate, with its own metal frame fire door, and automatic fire doors for the elevators.

Most of the interior space is divided by square concrete pillars. The south portion of the building has a lowered first floor at the First Street entrance and at the elevator in the eastern end. A mezzanine runs the entire length of the second story of the south portion. Concrete chutes are located on the first story of the east wing and provide loading access to the full basements. The floors and walls are of concrete, with metal sash window frames and no interior trim.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Urban Development Agency of Albuquerque with funding from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development in compliance with Executive Order 11593 and a Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as a mitigative effort in the demolition of the Charles Ilfeld Company Warehouse. John A. Burns, AIA was the HABS project coordinator. The photographs were taken in January, 1977 by Jerry Goffe of Monte Vista, New Mexico. The architectural and historical written data was prepared in the HABS office by Mary Beth Betts in July 1979 from research compiled by Michael McCachren, Archivist, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.